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New policy for contact lens

by Jan Davis

BUMED Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) — If you're a naval aviator or SEAL, and your commanding officer says you need contact lenses instead of glasses on the job, the Navy will now pay for them.

In the past, most Navy personnel who needed contact lenses to enhance their effectiveness on the job paid for the lenses themselves. But beginning Jan. 1, 1997 contact lenses and solutions are being provided to Navy and Marine Corps pilots, flight officers and air crew, as well as special warfare personnel (i.e., SEALS) whose job requires they wear contact lenses.

The new policy was implemented in CNO message 042158Z Dec 96. "The member's commanding officer is the 'gatekeeper' on who in their unit should be authorized contacts," said LCDR Ann Bobeck, MSC, health care analyst at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED). "He or she will be the one who will determine whether or not it's operationally necessary."

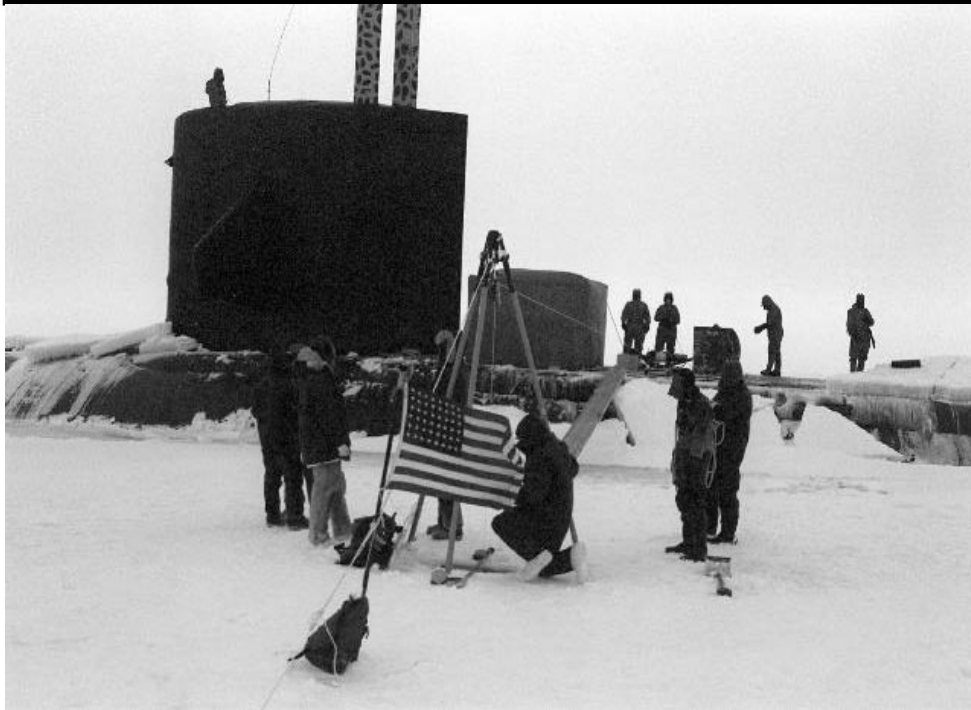
According to Bobeck, some of the reasons it's "mission essential" for aviators and SEALS to wear contact lenses is that their jobs often require them to wear night vision devices, protective eye equipment, diving mask, and other devices, all of which preclude wearing glasses. Eligibility for contact lenses must be documented in writing by the member's commanding officer to the supporting military treatment

see CONTACTS, page 4

NAVY NEWS

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The Navy's attack submarine USS *Pogy* (SSN 647) provided a base for environmental research in the North Pole. This experiment is just one of the Navy's many environmental programs implemented around the Fleet. (U.S. Navy photo by PH2 Steven H. Vanderwerff).

Navy wins Environmental award from the EPA

BETHESDA, Md. (NWSA) — Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, Bethesda, Md., Naval Ship Systems Engineering Station (NSWCCD-SSES), has been named the winner of the Environmental Protection Agency's Stratospheric Ozone Protection Award.

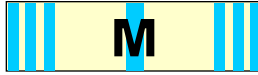
The Navy has one of the world's largest installed bases of CFC-12 air-conditioning and refrigeration

systems in its fleet of ships. To ensure protection of the environment without interfering with its mission, the Navy established an aggressive program in 1993 to convert its CFC-12-based systems to ozone-friendly HFC-134a. Under this program, the Naval Surface Warfare Center Philadelphia will convert the Navy's 1,100 CFC-12 plants to HFC-134a by the year 2000.

Armed Forces Reserve Medal info

by LT Lydia Robertson, BUPERS Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Details on eligibility for the Armed Forces Reserve Medal (AFRM), and an explanation of the appropriate devices and wear of the ribbon are contained in the recently released NAVADMIN 301/96. Specifically, the 'M' device applies only to those recalled under Title 10 United States Code 101 (a)(13).



According to the NAVADMIN, members must have been mobilized as a unit or individual and performed active duty in support of designated contingency operations — Desert Shield/Storm (Persian Gulf War), Restore Hope (Somalia), Uphold Democracy (Haiti), or Joint Endeavor (Bosnia) — on or after Aug. 1, 1990.

The NAVADMIN contains criteria for determining eligibility under what circumstances the hourglass device is awarded and how to correctly wear the ribbon with the proper devices.

Questions should be referred to the Awards Branch at (202)433-4992.

Surface Navy Association scholarship



ALEXANDRIA, Va. (NWSA) — The Surface Navy Association recently announced that its

VADM Robert L. Walters Scholarship Fund is accepting applications until Feb. 1.

The fund recog-

nizes worthy members or spouses and children of members of the association.

The scholarship will award \$500 per year, renewable for a maximum of four years, to eligible members working toward a first undergraduate degree at an accredited college or university.

To receive an application and additional information, contact SNA at:

7205 Burtonwood Drive, Alexandria, VA 22307-2021; or call (703)765-SHIP or 1-800-NAVY-SNA; e-mail: <NAVY SNA@aol.com>.

Tax assistance available to Sailors

by JO2 Scott Curtis

BUPERS Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NWSA) — For Navy members who dread filling out tax forms, "VITA" might be the nicest four-letter word spoken during the tax season. VITA, short for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, is a quality of life program that helps Sailors file their federal and state income tax returns electronically.

Preparing tax returns electronically offers faster refunds, fewer mistakes and saves money. Last year VITA personnel prepared more than 61,000 federal returns (14.5 percent of all active-duty Navy) and 16,500 state returns. Sailors saved more than \$5.7 million in tax preparation fees and received refunds of more than \$42 million. Electronic Tax Filing (ELF) will be available at most CONUS shore installations and at more than a dozen overseas shore installations. It is also expected that nearly every aircraft carrier and submarine tender will offer ELF services. The location of the VITA office nearest you can be found by contacting the local Naval Legal Service Office.

Personnel interested in assisting with the VITA/ELF program should contact their chain of command and the tax officer for their local tax center. NAVADMIN 271/96 outlines the ELF policy.



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THIS WEEK IN NAVY HISTORY

Jan. 3-9, 1945 — *In support of Task Force 38, ADM W. F. Halsey's Third Fleet delivered a series of carrier air strikes on Japanese airfields on Luzon.*

Battle Group trains with Tunisian forces

by JO1 Andrew Thomas

USS Theodore Roosevelt Public Affairs

ABOARD USS *THEODORE ROOSEVELT* — USS *Carr* (FFG 52) and several squadrons from Carrier Air Wing 3, embarked in USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71), recently completed air and sea exercises with Tunisian forces. The two exercises, NADOR (a

naval search and rescue exercise) and MINOR MANAR (an air exercise) demonstrated the ability to communicate with Tunisian forces and to carry out challenging operations.

"The exercises have many benefits," said Col. Ridha Bargaoui, Tunisian Chief of Air Operations. "By training with other countries our pilots can learn new tactics."

In the search and rescue exercise, U.S. and Tunisian naval and air forces located a simulated lost vessel.

MINOR MANAR paired Navy Fighter Squadron 32 with the Tunisian 15th air unit. The combined force conducted two days of air-to-air training exercises against Strike Fighter Squadrons 37 and 105 and Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron (VMFA) 312.

USS Essex exercises with the Emirates of Qatar

by JO2 David J. Myers

USS Essex Public Affairs

ARABIAN GULF (NWSA) — USS *Essex* Amphibious Task Group and 11TH Marine Expeditionary Unit recently conducted Exercise Eastern Maverick 97-1 with the Emirate of Qatar. The amphibious combined arms training exercise was part of an ongoing, bilateral exercise program between the two military forces.

The crew also hosted Crown Prince of Qatar and Deputy Emir Sheik Jassim Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani.

Maj. Drew Watson, 11th MEU operations officer said, "We want to strengthen relationships between the United States and Qatar, show our commitment to the nation of Qatar and strengthen military inter-operability between our two nations."

Watson, a native of Vestal, N.Y., said one of the major goals of the exercise was to get to know, at every level, our counterparts in the Qatari air and ground forces.

The crown prince, who is also a tank platoon commander, viewed Marine sniper platoon techniques and other aspects of Marine ground force operations.

USS Abraham Lincoln changes homeports

EVERETT, Wash. (NSWA) -- USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) officially changed its home port from Puget Sound Naval Station Shipyard in Bremerton, Wash., to Naval Station Everett on Jan. 8.

The aircraft carrier is the seventh ship homeported in Everett and brings a crew of approximately 3,000.

Status of the Navy

Jan. 6, 1997

Personnel: 408,478 active duty; 97,851 reserves; 217,824 civilians

Aircraft: 4,817

Ships: 352

At Sea: 106 ships (31%)

Deployed: 98 ships

Personnel Deployed: 47,682

Exercises: 5

Port Visits: 11

SSNs at Sea: 12 (16%)

Carriers/Air Wings at Sea:

USS *Kitty Hawk*/CVW-11: *Southern Watch*, Arabian Gulf

USS *Theodore Roosevelt*/CVW-3: local ops, Mediterranean Sea

LHAs/LHDs/LPHs at Sea:

USS *Essex*/11th MEU: Eager Mace AMPHIBEX, Arabian Gulf

USS *Nassau*/26th MEU: local ops, Adriatic Sea

Ships Assigned to Middle East Force: USS *Valley Forge*, USS *Jarrett*, USS *Ardent*, USS *Dextrous*, USS *Stump*, USS *Stephen W. Groves*, USS *Halyburton*

Other Exercises/Operations: Counter-Drug Operations, Caribbean/East Pacific Maritime Interception Operations, Arabian Gulf

Operation *Southern Watch*, Arabian Gulf

Exercise Eager Mace AMPHIBEX, Arabian Gulf

Summary of NAVADMINs

NAVADMIN 301/96

(DTG 311702Z DEC 96)

Explains the Award of the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with 'M' device.

NAVADMIN 002/97

(DTG 032211Z JAN 97)

Announces an increase in variable special pay for Dental Corps officers.

NAVADMIN 003/97

(DTG 062111Z JAN 97)

Announces the winners of the '96 Personal Excellence Partnership and Community Service awards.

NAVADMIN 004/97

(DTG 062110Z JAN 97)

Announces the dates for the '97 Saving Bonds campaign.

HSL-42 sets class 'A' mishap-free milestone

MAYPORT, Fla. (NWSA) -- Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron Light (HSL) 42 recently completed more than 90,000 flight-hours without a class "A" mishap.

The achievement represents the cumulative effort of HSL-42 through more than 10 years of operational flying. Deployed aboard frigates, destroyers and cruisers, squadron detachments completed 370 operational deployments including 5,300 flight hours in support of Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield, and logged 60,000 day/night all-weather shipboard landings.

HSL-42's safety record earned the squadron its fourth (sixth overall) consecutive Safety "S" for excellence in aviation safety from the Chief of Naval Operations.



Contacts

● continued from page 1

facility (MTF). Contact lenses fitting and follow-up care will be provided by ophthalmology or optometry clinics in the MTF.

Marine Corps aviators and air crew members have been authorized contact lenses since 1992. For them, the only change will be that they will now be supported by Navy MTFs for procurement of lenses.

The submarine contact lens program will not be affected by this policy change.

NAVY-MARINE CORPS NEWS

Navy-Marine Corps News is a videotaped newscast generated for broadcast to Navy-Marine Corps fleet and shore units. The next Navy-Marine Corps News (program #701) includes the following stories:

- Navy's free electronic tax filing makes tax time a little easier and faster
- Marine recruits take up the boot camp challenge of Crucible training
- USS *Belleau Wood* goes to dry dock in an unusual way
- Yokosuka Sailors bring smiles to orphans
- Personal Excellence Partnership and Community Service of the Year winners
- Focus on the Fleet: ABC's "Good Morning America" looks at the USS *Pogy*
- In April Marines can begin to be promoted monthly
- Hit the slopes with Operation Ski and Snowboard
- Sailors shop around for the best deals at the Washington, D.C. Autoshow
- MOVIE CALL: Tom Cruise's box office hit "Jerry Maguire"
- ROLLOUT: Washington, D.C. Autoshow

We need your input on Navy-Marine Corps News, so call our FEEDBACK LINE at (202) 433-6108 or DSN 288-6108 and leave a message or send us E-Mail at: nmcn@smtp.mediacen.navy.mil

If you have distribution questions contact Mr. John Morrissey at (202) 433-5844 or DSN 288-5844, or write him at the address mentioned below. All Navy-Marine Corps News tapes must be returned each week. Please use the enclosed return label.

If you have items that you think would be of interest to the Navy or Marine Corps worldwide, please submit your original video contributions on BetaCam, Hi-8, Super VHS, or 3/4 inch videotape to the nearest Navy Broadcasting Fleet Support Detachment or send by fastest means possible to our field producer at:

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